



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE No. 16-110

September 20, 2016

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24 VALVOLINE™ TEACHER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNERS NAMED

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – The Kentucky Department of Education and Valvoline™ have selected 24 outstanding Kentucky educators as recipients of the 2017 Valvoline Teacher Achievement Awards (TAA). These teachers qualify to compete for the 2017 Kentucky Teacher of the Year Award, which will be announced next month.

The 24 winning teachers are:

- Carren Cook, Kenwood Elementary School, Jefferson County
- Kimberly Delaney, Longbranch Elementary School, Boone County
- Donna Howard, Whitesville Elementary School, Daviess County
- Kellie Jones, Taylor County Elementary School, Taylor County
- Stephanie Laird, Heath Elementary School, McCracken County
- Jennifer O'Daniel, Olive Hill Elementary School, Carter County
- Elizabeth Ramey, Elkhorn City Elementary School, Pike County
- Byron Wilson, Kentucky School for the Deaf (elementary school)
- Myra Cowan, Robertson County School, Robertson County
- Jennifer Farley, Farristown Middle School, Madison County
- Alexandra Howard, Barrett Traditional Middle School, Jefferson County
- Sarah Mills, Eastside Middle School, Bullitt County
- Candida Murphy, Robert D. Campbell Jr. High School, Clark County
- Chasity Shipley, Barren County Middle School, Barren County
- Brandi Smith, Madison Middle School, Madison County
- Emmanuel Stone, Shelby County West Middle School, Shelby County
- Tamara Chapman, McCracken County High School, McCracken County
- Cathy Conley, Knott County Central High School, Knott County
- Cheryl Dicken, Campbellsville High School, Campbellsville Independent
- Kip Hottman, Fern Creek High School, Jefferson County
- Ashley Onkst, East Jessamine High School, Jessamine County
- Amanda Ratliff, Johnson Central High School, Johnson County
- Tricia Shelton, Boone County High School, Boone County
- Ronald Skillern, Bowling Green High School, Bowling Green Independent

All 24 teachers will be honored at a ceremony in Frankfort on October 19 in the State Capitol Building. Governor Matt Bevin, Education and Workforce Secretary Hal Heiner, Commissioner of Education Stephen Pruitt, and Sam Mitchell, Chief Executive Officer of Valvoline, will honor the teachers and recognize the Kentucky Elementary, Middle and High School Teachers of the Year. From this group of three finalists, the Kentucky Teacher of the Year will be named and will represent the state in the National Teacher of the Year competition.

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Valvoline will present the 24 TAA recipients with cash awards and certificates at the awards ceremony. In addition to cash awards, the three Kentucky Teachers of the Year also will receive custom-designed glassware commemorating their accomplishments, and all 24 educators will be honored at a special luncheon after the ceremony.

Judging was conducted in August by a blue-ribbon panel of veteran educators, many of whom have more than 25 years of teaching experience. Applications included information on the nominees' teaching philosophies, teaching experiences and involvement in their respective communities, as well as letters of recommendation from peers, students, parents, administrators and others.

The Kentucky Teacher Awards program combines the best elements of what was formerly known as the Ashland Teacher Achievement Awards. As Valvoline is separating from Ashland to become a publicly traded company headquartered in Lexington, Ky., Valvoline is now sponsoring the Teacher Achievement Awards and the Kentucky Teacher of the Year programs. This marks the 16th year the Department of Education and Ashland/Valvoline have partnered to honor Kentucky educators. Since 1988, approximately \$776,500 has been awarded to 524 teachers in grades K to 12.

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